

# Towards a People's Army

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*This pamphlet was produced by a special committee of the Communist Party, which included ex-Service members. The Committee received the views of a considerable number of Service members of the Communist Party in the course of its discussions.*

*Readers are invited to send their opinions, criticisms and suggested amendments to the Publishers.*

**Published by**

**THE COMMUNIST PARTY**  
**16 KING STREET,**  
**LONDON,**  
**W.C.2.**

**JUNE, 1946**

Printed in the United Kingdom by Farleigh Press Ltd. (*T.U. all depts.*),  
Beechwood Works, Beechwood Rise, Watford, Herts. CP/M/69/5/46.2

# Towards A People's Army

DISCUSSION on the future of the British Armed Forces is taking place against a background of increasing strain in international relations. The atom bomb diplomacy of the U.S.A. is finding its counterpart in Britain's foreign policy, looked upon with dismay by increasing numbers of Labour supporters in Britain and democratic and progressive forces throughout the world.

The key issue in all discussion of the future of the Armed Forces is the purpose for which they are used. This decides the attitude of Socialists towards them and in the long run stamps the character of these forces. A democratic Army is an impossibility in fact if the Army is to be used for reactionary purposes.

In the war against Fascism, the British soldier proved himself second to none in tenacity, courage, endurance and resource. The traditional use of British Armed Forces for imperialist policy set its stamp on the pre-war character of the Army—the colonial garrison outlook, the officer caste, the severe barrack discipline, the complete reactionary outlook which prevailed. Such a state of affairs produced an Army unsuited for modern war, just as the Munich foreign policy created a national crisis in face of the Fascist enemy. The Army consequently had to grow into an efficient fighting force largely as a result of political pressure and bitter experience. It was moulded by the nature of the struggle. It played a worthy part among the Armed Forces of the United Nations. It became a part of the British people, who are proud of what they did for the physical defeat of Fascism—fit allies of the armies of Marshal Tito, of the French Resistance, of the Chinese and the Malayans and of the Red Army.

It was the profound experiences of the war against Fascism, a really popular war, which brought many changes to the Army.

A more democratic spirit grew up, the attitude towards the soldier was modified, methods of training were improved, there was a nearer approach to political freedom. These things had to be if the Army was to be fitted to fight such a war. The Army itself became more of a reflection of the unity of the whole people for the defeat of Fascism.

Something else happened during the war besides the defeat of Fascism: this was shown at the General Election, when the people unmistakably rejected the Tories and placed Labour firmly in power. The decisive new factor is the deep change in political feeling brought about in the British people by the war, which found its expression in the election of the Labour Government and will find expression in a continued determination to keep the Tories out for ever and to reap the fruits of six years' struggle.

There can be no doubt, however, that British Foreign Policy has caused the most serious concern to democratic forces throughout the world. The main task following military victory was to eliminate all vestiges of Fascism and reaction. This is as yet far off. British troops are being used in support of Dutch imperialism in Indonesia. Greek reaction has been brought to power in a country garrisoned by our Armed Forces against the will of the Greek people. In the British zone of Germany Fascism and reaction are anything but eliminated and, on the contrary, thrive under the benevolent policy of the military government. Despite negotiations, British Colonial garrisons still occupy India, Egypt, Burma and Malaya. Such "tasks" have nothing in common with the fight against Fascism and reaction and are already having their effect on the changes which took place in the Army during the war.

There is no doubt that already, only just on a year after the end of hostilities, the Army is slipping back. The spirit of unity and democracy is fading. The spirit of imperialism and the police mentality is returning. Nor is this unconnected with the policies in support of which the Army is being used.

Army reform, therefore, has become an urgent practical problem, which the Labour Government will neglect at its peril.

It is a problem which the Labour movement, and particularly trade unionists, need to study closely in all its implications. It is something to which the Labour movement is pledged by Conference decision.

**Army reform can only be discussed against the background of the purposes for which the army is used. The first necessity for a democratic Army in Britain is a change of foreign policy and an end to the Army as an instrument of imperialism. With a foreign policy based on friendship with Russia and the new democratic governments of Europe, the Armed Forces could be recast for Britain's role in eliminating the remnants of Fascism, for Britain's defence in accordance with the United Nations Organisation and mutual assistance pacts with our Allies. Real colonial freedom would end the need for thousands to be tied down as colonial garrisons.**

It is with this essential and urgent background that the Communist Party sets out for discussion below its views on the future of the Armed Forces.

## **PURPOSE OF THE ARMY**

The purpose for which the Army is needed is one in which the United Nations, having co-operated in the military defeat of Fascism, have the responsibility to struggle to advance democracy and rebuild the world economically and politically. The military defeat of Fascism was a triumph of the peoples. The new perspectives opened by it set new tasks before the Armed Forces of the United Nations and in particular before those of Great Britain. No longer must the British Army be used as an instrument of repression, the means of holding down a subject people or imposing the wishes of reactionary interests at home and abroad.

It must be organised and trained for a new role, in which there are two principal tasks:

- (a) Fulfilment of International obligations: the maintenance of Collective Security under the United Nations.
- (b) Occupation of ex-enemy countries, Germany and Japan.

\* in accordance with the armistice terms and the peace treaties.

Effectiveness for carrying out these tasks must decide the size and character of the Army in the immediate future. Every aspect of Army life requires to be reviewed and planned from this point of view.

A policy of full support for the United Nations requires that the use of the Army as a Garrison Force for Imperialism in opposition to the wishes of the Indian and other peoples in the colonial areas, should be ended as rapidly as possible. With the speedy realisation of self-government by the Indian people, their army under their own Government's control must replace the British garrison. This will be a great step forward in Indian participation in collective security through the United Nations, and will free the British Army of a heavy and harmful responsibility.

## UNIVERSAL MILITARY SERVICE— AN ARMY OF THE PEOPLE

The great changes in the methods of modern war make necessary a new approach to the Armed Forces in the country. These can no longer depend on a haphazard voluntary recruitment, depending partly on the coercive force of unemployment. Modern warfare demands a highly skilled, equipped and carefully trained striking force capable of swift movement. The modern soldier must learn to become a craftsman. He has not only to master strategy and tactics; he must also learn to handle and maintain the highly complicated and delicate machinery now found in all arms of the Services. The trained soldier is a technician.

Such skill cannot be acquired in a few months. It can only be achieved after long and careful training. Therefore the basis of the Army must be the highly-trained professional soldier, attracted to the Service by the scope it offers as a career for intelligent men and by its attractive pay and conditions.

At the same time, because of the high standards of skill

required, and because of the need for quick reinforcement due to the methods of modern warfare, it is essential for large numbers of trained reserves to be available. Such reserves cannot be obtained from newly-recruited men. They can only be made available after months of instruction and training. The country must be in a position to produce a highly-skilled army, supported by a large number of trained reserves should the necessity arise.

For these reasons and because the new Army must be a democratic growth used only in the interests of democracy, with its roots deeply planted in the people, it must be based on universal military service.

Such a system will have a profound effect on the youth of the country, upon their training and upon progress in their careers. Careful consideration needs to be given to the age for conscription. In order to assist discussion of this problem two views are presented here:

## Call-up at the Age of 18

It is clearly desirable, if not essential, that all candidates for regular service should complete their normal period of compulsory service before being admitted to the Regular Army or being chosen for training as officers. This necessitates an early age of call-up since it will effect the whole age basis of the Regular Army. Were the call-up delayed to the age of 20 or 21 no men would start training for commission till the age of 21 or 22. It is assumed that service will include:

- (a) Basic training.
  - (b) Corps training.
  - (c) Service with a unit, *e.g.*, on occupational duties.
  - (d) Continued education in trade or profession.
- See  
Section 6.

In addition, a cadet would do two years at the Army College and a further period of training at his Corps schools. Thus the subaltern would not reach his unit till he was 24 or 25.

At 18 a youth is fit to begin military training; and after 18 months (provided he has the right qualities) he is quite capable

of responding to the training as a young officer. The call-up at the late age of 20 or 21 is to throw away, from the military point of view, two years of the young officers' greatest fitness for duty as a junior leader. Call-up at 18 would particularly affect:

- (a) The Apprentice.
- (b) The University Student.

#### **(a) Apprenticeship**

Assuming a minimum school leaving age of 15, call-up at 18 will break into many apprenticeships. The tendency is, however, for the school leaving age to rise, so that apprenticeships will eventually be affected even if the call-up is delayed to the age of 20. Even with a leaving age of 15 apprenticeships of five to seven years will in any case be affected.

It is suggested that special arrangements could be made for certain categories of trades to enable the apprentice to be called up at a higher age level for special service in R.E.M.E. or other technical branches of the Services. Such a scheme would make necessary a special advisory body of the T.U.C.

#### **(b) University Students**

With the development now taking place in education there will be a considerable increase in the number of youths going to universities or university colleges. The organisation of universal military service must allow for this. It is better for the potential student to serve between leaving school at the normal age of 18 and going on to the university than for him to be called up at the age of 20 in the middle of his higher studies and within a year or so of his final examination.

It is arguable that there should be some flexibility in the call-up age to cover this point. General Service at 18 would provide a resource of about 375,000 men in active training as each age group falls due for service, on the present population level. This number, together with the proposed professional force, which should be about 300,000, would provide the necessary strength for carrying through the immediate tasks of any

call to international action and would form a suitable nucleus for any swift expansion necessary in a crisis.

## Call-up at the Age of 20

Against these arguments is the view that to call up at 18 would interfere too gravely with apprenticeship and further education and that the call-up at 20 or 21 presents fewer problems. To call young men to the colours before they have finished their training or their studies would not only set them back in their trades and careers but would make their position on returning to civil life from the Army more difficult, particularly if they have to return to a position of apprentice or trainee at 20 after eighteen months of Army life.

Army schools or workshops would be no compensation: the type of schooling or training would differ from the organisation and atmosphere of civil establishments.

Youths should therefore complete their apprenticeship or studies before being called-up. Their re-absorption into civil life would then be simple and military training would not be complicated by additional schemes for students and apprentices. The normal age for call-up would then be 21 or more, at which age physique would be more capable of taking the strain of Army training and mental ability more attuned to receive training.

Whichever age is selected, however, it is certain that only on the introduction of universal military service can the necessary number of trained reserves be provided to enable this country to carry out its obligations to the United Nations and bring about the democratic measures needed to fit the British Army for its task.

In the few months since, large-scale military preparations ended, the situation in the Army has already begun to deteriorate. It is clear that many of the most valuable improvements in wartime were improvised rather than planned. Living and working conditions were inevitably subordinated in many ways to training and the development of fighting skill. In spite of important changes, the quartermaster's and adjutant-general's

branches remain a maze of regulations, and are ripe for a thorough clean-out. The recently issued White Papers have done much to simplify the pay code, a job long overdue.

We need to do away with harsh and restrictive policies and, aided by the experiences of the war, to confirm and develop those democratic measures which were so valuable and produced such rich results in 1939-45. In this way the People's Army of the future will make use of all that is best in the past and emerge closely linked with the better Britain that we are working to build today.

## Too Sweeping?

During the late war, the British Army introduced a number of changes, with the idea of allowing more democracy in the Armed Forces. The changes came about for two main reasons: the Army was doing a democratic anti-fascist duty, which inspired civilians and soldiers alike and demanded their co-operation; the Army was made up of a fair cross-section of the whole population, who became "citizens in uniform" to carry out that task.

To retain these advances and to develop further along democratic lines, is as vital for the future of Britain as it is for the well-being of the Army itself. Never again can we afford an Army living and thinking apart from the nation, drilled in an anti-democratic outlook.

The Army must become an instrument of the people, and not of a privileged caste whose interests are contradictory to those of the country as a whole. Universal military service is the first step in that direction. The soldier must understand his duties and rights as a citizen. His Army training must help to make him an educated and valuable citizen, a credit to the nation.

## REGULAR AND MILITIAMAN

The continuance of Universal Military Service will not mean the disappearance of regular service. There must be a regular cadre to provide:

- (a) Training for the Militia.

- (b) Highly-skilled technicians in trades which involve longer training than is feasible for Militiamen.
- (c) Continuity of study and research in tactics, equipment and the technique of command.

Such a cadre of highly-trained professional soldiers must not become a body apart from the Militia, out of sympathy with the mass of the ordinary people. It must be the inspiration and education of those called up, binding them together in a spirit of democratic popular service. This requires:

- (a) All candidates for regular service, including those selected to train as officers, to complete their military service before taking any further special training.
- (b) Officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, to be recruited largely from working and middle-class sources and not mainly from the smallest class in the nation.
- (c) The Army to be planned as a whole, with a proper balance of Regulars and Militiamen in all arms, i.e., the most powerful striking weapons, such as the armoured corps and the artillery, must not be confined to the Regular Army, in spite of the great difficulty involved in bringing recruits to a trained soldier standard within the period of military service.
- (d) The principle of equal pay for equal work to be recognised between Militiamen and Regulars, and no discrimination in treatment of the two classes.
- (e) The period of military service to be long enough for the Militiaman to master his trade. This will probably involve a period of eighteen months.
- (f) So long as a large part of the Army is required to serve abroad, every Militiaman to do part of his service out of the United Kingdom; six to eight months out of a total of 18 would be the usual proportion. Such a tour need not only include British garrisons. In order to broaden the outlook of the Militiaman, arrangements should be made to exchange troops between such countries as Canada, France, Australia, U.S.S.R., South Africa, etc.

- (g) A Unit's tour of overseas service to be two and a half to three years for the professional soldier only.
- (h) The training and organisation of the Army to be based on the view that the universal military service is part of a man's general education, an integral part of his life and development as a citizen.

## THE OFFICER SYSTEM

The standard of its officers is decisive for the success of any army, and for a People's Army most of all. The whole future of the democratic army depends on the correct approach to this problem. It is one to which the Labour movement, and particularly the T.U.C., needs to give close attention. During the war, a high standard was reached by most officers. Young regular officers with fresh ideas and outlook were brought on by rapid promotion; Territorial and Yeomanry officers, mostly from the professional classes, were quickly tested in posts of responsibility; tens of thousands of young men from all walks of life were given intensive officer training courses with excellent results. The platoon and troop commanders who were the mainspring of our success in battle nearly all had previous experience in the ranks. From these varied sources an approach to a balanced officer corps was made during the war, though many obstacles still remain to be overcome.

### What an Officer Should Be

The following qualities are needed in all officers:

- (a) Democratic conviction.
- (b) Knowledge and experience of the life and conditions of the ordinary soldier.
- (c) Leadership : the capacity to inspire and command.
- (d) First-class technical efficiency.
- (e) A broad general education.
- (f) Knowledge of other people and their countries, particularly of the needs and aspirations of the colonial people.

## How to Get Such Officers

- (a) All promotion must be genuinely from the ranks—no man to be considered for Commission until he has completed two-thirds of his military service. No special training until the completion of military service.
- (b) Consideration must be given to the idea of competitive entry into commissioned rank based (as was largely the case with the War Office Selection Board during the war) on general education, state of military training, reaction to tasks of leadership and endurance, knowledge of and interest in public affairs. Outside bodies such as educational establishments and trade unions should be associated with these tests.
- (c) All cadets on completing their other rank service should go to an Army College.\* Financial allowances must be made to enable any soldier from any walk of life to attend the college without a strain on his family or a drag on his own progress.
- (d) The Army College should provide a two years' course, mainly of general education, including social and political history, economic and administration. This would be followed by six to twelve months' corps training at a corps school or depot. (NOTE—The whole method, organisation, approach and staffing of the Army College will require an overhaul to bring it into line with the principle of this memorandum).
- (e) Promotion should be more in relation to efficiency and performance than to age.
- (f) Ample provision for scholarships for foreign travel should be made.
- (g) Regular arrangements must be made for all officers to be seconded for attachment to other services.

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\* To be based on the Royal Military College, developed along University lines to train Cadets as professional officers.

## The Army as a Career

It is essential to attract into the Army the best representatives of all classes of the nation. From this it follows that terms of pay and conditions of service must be such as to compete with other careers. This will entail, as far as officers are concerned:

- (a) A general and considerable upgrading of rates of pay for all ranks to bring them into line with reasonable expectation in other professions.
- (b) A complete review of pensions regulations, which are still such as to discourage any man without private means from continuing to serve.
- (c) A strict control of mess and other charges and expenses.
- (d) No ban on promotion by rigid age considerations.
- (e) Provision of facilities for all officers to keep abreast of developments in civil life, to keep up cultural educational contacts and carry on study and research parallel with or in connection with their military duties.

NOTE—The recently announced changes in officers' rates of pay, while simplifying the system and containing a number of improvements, do not in their general provisions meet the need. They scarcely cover the increased cost of living since 1939; they offer less inducement to good men to reach the higher ranks; they are not related to any reform in the recruitment of officers and they are not linked with a policy of limiting the expenditure to which officers are liable.

## DISCIPLINE AND DEMOCRACY

Sound discipline, based on a high and intelligent morale, is essential to the efficiency and well-being of the Army. During the late war great strides were made towards a more intelligent approach to discipline and its only solid basis in understanding and consent.

The best spirit of our war-time discipline must be retained in a future Army, based on the following general principles:

- (a) Thorough education of all ranks on the need for and purpose of the Army, its aims and methods.

- (b) Freedom of political discussion and participation in political activities in their own time and when out of uniform, for all ranks.
- (c) Careful explanation of orders, methods of training and all Army activities, and the reasons for them.
- (d) Discussion of Army problems, including organisation and training among all ranks.
- (e) Unquestioned obedience to orders.
- (f) Mutual confidence between officers and men.

## Rights of the Soldier

Certain rights must be laid down for the soldier, together with means for protecting him, e.g.:

- (a) His right to take part in political activity.
- (b) His right to stand for election to local council and to Parliament.
- (c) His right to read and discuss any publication or topic which may legally be read and discussed by other citizens.
- (d) His right to certain periods of leave.
- (e) His right to free travel for all such leave.
- (f) His right to communicate freely with his M.P. on any subject.

It is realised that security and emergency may sometimes have to modify these rights. It is essential, however, that these rights should be categorically stated and that the circumstances in which they can be modified, together with the necessary procedure, be clearly laid down.

## Growing Democracy in the Army

There is much that is democratic in Army life and methods; war-time experience in strengthening these aspects must be fully recognised and developed further. The following are guides to this end:

- (a) **Representative Committees.** These are already provided for in A.C.I.\* and other Regulations in relation to messing,

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\* Army Council Instructors which regulate day-to-day life of the Army.

sport, welfare, entertainment, etc., but only rarely are they thoroughly effective. They should be made universal and wherever possible should be not only advisory bodies but actually responsible for carrying out their own decisions (subject to C.O.'s vote on major issues). Unit and Company Funds (derived mainly from N.A.A.F.I. rebates) should likewise be under much closer control by the men. In particular is this proposed for the N.A.A.F.I. Institute over which there is much discontent amongst the Forces. These Committees should be established by the Army Act included in standing orders.

Similar representative Committees should be set up in Commands where there is a useful purpose to be served, such as the war-time All Ranks Committees established in some overseas Commands to sift and recommend applications for compassionate postings.

(b) **Information Sessions.** The practice developed in this war by some commanders of keeping their troops fully informed on the tactical situation and on their own aims and intentions should be widely developed. On a section or company basis, regular meetings should be held in working hours to discuss suggestions and complaints (in that order), to answer questions and difficulties, to make known plans for the future and to arouse interest and co-operation in schemes of training, education, etc. Where suitable, similar meetings can be held for Representative Committees to report.

(c) **Suggestions.** The A.C.I. providing for suggestion boxes to be prominently displayed in every Unit would be much less likely to remain a dead letter if the above proposals were generally adopted. Special attention should be paid to suggestions for improving training methods and tactics, for saving labour, time and material, or for preventing avoidable hardship. Every facility should be given for the public discussion of such suggestions, and the impression that they encroach on the "managerial functions" of the officers must not be given.

Minor points regarding administration and welfare could well be recorded in a public Suggestions Book, as is usual in officers' messes, and the replies of the company commander or responsible officer entered against each suggestion.

Foremost among the criteria by which the worth of an officer and especially of a commanding officer is judged, are the discipline and keenness of his men. It is generally recognised that high morale is the result of many different factors, and requires attention to all sides of a soldier's life. Should we not say also that a practical test of the value of a commanding officer is the extent to which such visible and practical democratic forms as those listed above are developed among the men under his command?

## King's Regulations

The time has come to overhaul and simplify the whole Army Act and King's Regulations in the spirit of this memorandum. In general, it is necessary to introduce into those regulations the following conceptions:

- (a) The soldier is a human being.
- (b) The soldier has certain fundamental political rights.
- (c) The officering of the Army demands that the soldier be given a genuine voice in certain basic things which affect him closely, *e.g.*:

Methods of training and organisation.

Living conditions.

Welfare and entertainment.

It is time these things ceased to be permissive. They must be positively written into military law.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Some of the more important principles are:

- (a) All basic training during conscript service with no division between the Regular and Auxiliary Army.
- (b) Use of modern methods and equipment to speed up basic training so as to ensure that the major part of a man's service is with his unit. The maximum permissible period at the depot would be five months in military service of a year, eight months in a service of eighteen months.

- (c) Use of methods which interest the student and draw him into discussing and planning the work. It is necessary to inspire the soldier to see in promotion an opportunity for leadership and responsibility based on ability. The moral incentive to rise in rank should be at least as strong as the economic.
- (d) Technical training linked with trade training where possible and parallel training in a man's own trade throughout his service.
- (e) Compulsory continued education, e.g., as in County Colleges.
- (f) The whole training and education policy and programme to be worked out in close conjunction with educational bodies, technical training schools, trade unions and trade associations, these bodies being drawn in locally to give practical help and advice.
- (g) A system of awards and scholarships whereby outstanding soldiers—(a) can go on to higher educations; (b) benefit financially by their outstanding work; (c) travel at home and abroad and study further the technique of their trade.
- (h) For regulars, opportunities for continued education, taking of diplomas, degrees, etc., and provision for trade training and refresher courses in the last two years before leaving the Army.

The problem of maintaining efficiency after men leave the Army can be overcome by keeping all militia on active reserve for five years and recalling them for refresher service once a year. No voluntary territorial system can possibly meet this need.

Consideration should be given to forming a corps of education officers, on a wider and sounder basis than the Army Education Corps, providing an education officer for each unit with a position in relation to the commanding officer similar to that of the medical officer.

This proposal must in no way detract from the responsibility of the company or section commander for the well-being of his

men in an educational sense, as in all other ways. One of the strongest points in favour of the A.B.C.A.\* and "British Way and Purpose,"† schemes, was that they fixed this responsibility firmly upon the junior officer. The fact that during the war many officers have been unwilling to carry out these duties and many C.O.s have accepted almost any excuse for their non-fulfilment, is not a valid argument against the principle.

In the more democratic Army for which we are working, these obstacles to the "orientation" (to use the American term) of all ranks will be rapidly removed. The advance of general knowledge and the study and discussion of current affairs will help enormously to make each soldier a "valuable and educated citizen."

## PAY AND LIVING CONDITIONS

A People's Army must give its members general equality with other occupations so far as standards of living are concerned. We shall not get an intelligent, efficient and democratic Army unless it provides, for all ranks, an attractive career. This must include pay, pensions, living conditions, opportunities for education and advancement, and the possibility of a reasonable family life.

### Pay and Allowances

The recent White Paper is to be welcomed as going a long way to clear up the pay regulations and to get equality between the three Services and between the Services and industry. There are still, however, criticisms to be made and anomalies to be removed. The following points require further discussion:

(a) The White Paper appears to deal with Regular Forces only. If military service is to continue, the problems that it brings will also have to be dealt with, and in particular there will have to be dependant's allowances and hardship grants.

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\* Army Bureau of Current Affairs which was largely responsible for education.

† This was the title of a series of booklets purporting to explain British life in all aspects.

There should also be some method of dealing with the regular whose family circumstances change seriously for the worse while he is in the Services.

(b) Accepting the two-star rate as "normal" and equivalent to the semi-skilled rate in industry, means that every recruit should expect to obtain two stars by the time he has completed his eighteen months' military service.

(c) The new rates are not attractive to the married man with children, and it is important to reduce the barriers to the Regular Serviceman having a normal family life. But it is also important to maintain the equality of family allowance between Serviceman and civilian, and if an increase all round is impossible, it might be best to concentrate on increasing the provision of married quarters for all ranks.

(d) There is considerable criticism of the proposal to make marriage and family allowances subject to Income Tax. Again the principle of equal treatment with the civilian is important.

(e) If the demand for a £4 10s. minimum wage in industry is successful, men in the Forces should be brought in line, i.e., recruits rate 35/- instead of 28/-, two-star rate 49/- instead of 42/-.

## Camps and Barracks

(a) Most of the barracks of this country need to be pulled down and rebuilt. The sharp contrast in amenities between officers' and other ranks' quarters must be ended by greatly improving the living conditions of the private soldier. These should include:

1. attractive dining halls with modern equipment, methods of serving and keeping food warm;
2. ample and modern washing and bathing accommodation;
3. barrack rooms to accommodate five or six men, rather than 20 or 30, with quiet rooms in the same block;
4. cultural centres, including attractive canteens, reading, writing and games rooms, comfortable cinemas, theatre with up-to-date equipment, library, gymnasium.

(b) Special consideration should be given to the small or isolated camp where all the above facilities are not possible but which can nevertheless be made very comfortable on a smaller scale.

(c) The administration and control of the N.A.A.F.I. needs to be completely re-organised, especially as the voluntary organisations cannot be expected to carry on all their wartime activities. The main essential is direct control at all levels by active representative soldiers, sailors and airmen of all ranks.

(d) The design and quality of uniforms must be improved. In principle there should be little or no distinction between ranks apart from the insignia. Careful attention must be given to providing comfortable and pleasing walking out uniform and to such details as raincoats, ties and shoes for all ranks.

## MILITARY PRISONS AND DETENTION BARRACKS

The principal lines of reform required in military prisons and detention barracks are:

1. Increased segregation of prisoners of different types.
2. More careful recruitment of staff.

### Segregation

Under existing regulations (King's Reg. 711) the penal institutions to which a soldier may be sent are: civil prison, military prison, military detention barracks, and barrack detention room (the latter is merely a unit or garrison guard room authorised for such use).

Soldiers may be sent to one or other of the above as follows:

- i. Detention under 168 hours: detention barracks or barrack detention room.
- ii. Detention over 168 hours (and up to two years): detention barracks.
- iii. Imprisonment under two years for military offences: military prison or detention barracks.

- iv. Imprisonment under two years for military offences with discharge with ignominy: military prison or civil prison.
- v. Imprisonment for two years for military offences: civil prison.
- vi. Imprisonment for any length for civil offences: civil prison.

The "detention camps" such as Fort Darland and Stake Hill are military detention barracks, which can therefore take men with any sentence of detention and men with sentences of under two years' imprisonment for military offences.

The main types of offender found at detention barracks are:

- i. Soldiers of good character serving first or second sentences for offences of a military nature, requiring "deterrent" treatment through loss of freedom and privileges.
- ii. Soldiers with repeated offences, usually arising from an anti-service or anti-discipline attitude, requiring "reformatory" treatment.
- iii. Soldiers with a fixed criminal or anti-social attitude, beyond the scope of a military penal establishment.

The present practice whereby all three types are found in one detention barracks needs reform.

During the war, at Aldershot, Northallerton and Riddrie, military prisons have been combined in the same establishment with detention barracks, thereby nullifying even the crude segregation provided for in the regulations.

Reforms required are:

- i. Military prisons to be entirely separate establishments from detention barracks and to take soldiers with sentences of imprisonment for military offences for any period; detention over one year.
- ii. Two separate classes of detention barracks to be established: Class I, for soldiers with sentences of detention of over 28 days and not exceeding one year; Class II, for soldiers with sentences of detention up to 28 days.

## Recruitment of Staff

Whilst the existing regulations against any form of ill-treatment need to be enforced by the strictest supervision, it is impossible

by regulation or supervision, however strict, to prevent the possibility of isolated acts of brutality. These can only be avoided by the most careful selection of staff, rejecting any N.C.O.s with the slightest indications of sadistic or short-tempered temperament. Selections should be made by a board having before it complete annual reports of each candidate and assisted by a psychiatrist.

Further, the maximum period of duty that any N.C.O. should spend on this job should be limited to two years.

## Other Reforms

Other reforms required are:

1. The number of commissioned officers on the staff of any military prison or detention barracks must be sufficient for one to be on duty throughout the 24 hours.
2. Every military prison or detention barracks must have: a whole-time medical officer; a whole-time welfare officer; a psychiatrist who visits the establishment not less than once a week.

Note: A number of the above points were mentioned by the Prime Minister's Committee of Enquiry into Detention Barracks, 1943 (Cmd. 6484).

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER SERVICES

Operational liaison between the three services has reached a much higher level in the late war than at any previous period. For this reason, and because of the separate Service traditions and the different functions they are required to perform in the Imperial system, as it is at present, there is no loud demand, as there is in the United States, for complete unification.

Nevertheless, the mutual co-operation and understanding reached in wartime has had to overcome many obstacles and powerful vested interests; it has already been weakened as peace-time conditions return. It is therefore essential that all

planning should proceed side by side for the three services, and should be consciously directed towards improved relations. It seems unlikely that this can be achieved without the formation of one Ministry of Defence.

Many "common user" services, such as Supply, Signals, Welfare, Education and Medical should be worked in with each other more closely than is the rule at present, with sufficient flexibility in administration to prevent overlapping. It is also true many progressive schemes and developments have been much more successful in one Service than in the others, and a greater exchange of information would assist all.

## WOMEN'S SERVICES

It seems certain whether the Army is needed for occupation or the enforcement of collective security, that there will continue to be a need for women's services. They can clearly fill a useful place in peace as in war. No means of conscription should be applied to women however. If conditions in the women's services are improved and pay and terms of service put on a level with those for men, sufficient numbers of the right type of women would be available. The selection and training of officers for the women's services should be based on the same principles and methods as these for officers in the Army.

## THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE ARMY

The organisations and members of the Labour movement have a decisive contribution to make in strengthening the mutual understanding and respect between soldier and civilian. Labour must have a policy for the Armed Forces, which gives them an honourable place in the life of the nation as a major weapon in the struggle for collective security and a peaceful world.

The barriers which have been erected between the Labour movement and the Army were due to the traditions of the Army

and the suspicions raised by strike-breaking in the past, or to the idea that the Army was a body to be used not only against another Power for imperialist aims, but also against the progressive forces at home. The events of the last few years have shown the need for a change of this viewpoint. With a universal Militia service in this country and the use of the Armed Forces for collective security, the nature of the Army will undergo considerable change. Reaction has often tried to turn the Army and the workers in industry against one another, and no doubt the same tactics must be expected to block better relations in the future. Our answer must be twofold: our programme for a People's Army, the link between the people and their sons under universal military service, our conscious sustained effort to build up good relations in practical terms, and the introduction of democratic measures into the Army.

In particular the following points must be considered:

- (a) All men called up should be retained as trade union members free of charge or at a reduced rate during their period of service.
- (b) Where applicable, technical training and trade ratings received in the Army should be recognised by the trade unions and employers as contributing towards apprenticeship periods and the requirements of a skilled worker.
- (c) Every Union Branch, Labour Party or Co-operative Guild with members in the Forces should appoint a special person or committee to keep in regular touch (at least once a month) with such members and to arrange for the despatch of trade union news, literature, etc.
- (d) The trade unions and co-operatives should interest themselves deeply and practically in the welfare of the Forces, in the provision of canteens, libraries, lectures, educational material, sports equipment, etc.
- (e) The Labour movement must be prepared to help in the educational work of the Army and in the promotion of full and free political discussion among all ranks. The people must accept full responsibility for their Army.
- (f) Every effort should be made to develop and assist

ex-Service associations that are run democratically, that serve the interests of their members as regards employment, compensation and pensions, housing problems, etc., and that work closely with the trade unions for these purposes.

## CONCLUSION

The Allied victory over fascism and the return of a Labour Government to power in Britain means that the time is ripe for far-reaching reforms in the Armed Forces. Although for various reasons the Labour movement has no cut-and-dried programme worked out on this subject, it is probable that the majority of what is here proposed will meet with very general acceptance.

In May, 1939, at the Labour Party Conference at Southport, a Policy Statement entitled "Labour and Defence," was adopted. The present outline builds upon the general principles of that document and upon the important advances that have been made in war-time practice. It must be realised that most of these advances were only made when the need had become painfully evident in the urgent conditions of a major war. Under different circumstances, if public interest in these matters was to wane, and "leave it to the experts," once again became the cry, it would be quite possible for most of the progress made to be lost.

**It is therefore essential, if we are to advance towards the real "People's Army" that we have in mind, that the following should be done :**

- (a) **The drive for rapid reform, along the lines here indicated, must proceed publicly both within the Army and from the outside.**
- (b) **The Government and its supporters must reach decisions within a short space of time on the major questions of principle and ensure that the Army leadership is such as will understand and carry out these decisions.**
- (c) **All sections of the Labour movement must concern themselves urgently with these problems and contributions they can make towards their solution.**

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